

LIS 6919 Seminar in Qualitative Research in LIS Spring 2011

Instructor: **Fill in info here**
Day and Time: **Mondays, 2-4:45pm**
Location: **Gregory Conference Room, Shores Building** (in Goldstein Library)
Course Blog: **<http://fill.in.url.here>**

Course Description

This seminar covers a variety of qualitative research methods that may be used in library and information science. It explores general, epistemological, and ethical issues with qualitative research; methods of data collection; techniques for data analysis; and evaluation of qualitative research.

Prerequisites

- Doctoral student standing
- Completion of LIS 6279, Seminar in Research in Information Studies, or a similar research methods course

The instructor may waive these requirements under exceptional circumstances.

Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- follow qualitative research processes and understand their similarities and differences;
- explain epistemological and philosophical positions in qualitative research and their individual place in this landscape;
- conduct practical qualitative data collection and coding;
- choose between and employ a variety of qualitative research methods and techniques for analysis;
- evaluate qualitative research by both traditional and new criteria; and
- respond to ethical, moral, and political issues that arise when conducting qualitative research.

Assignments

In-class activities (32%): There are eight in-class activities throughout the semester (indicated in the course calendar), each offering you the chance to get hands-on practical experience with topics within and methods of qualitative research. The exact nature of each activity varies; you may be working individually, in pairs, or in small groups (thus paralleling real-life qualitative research projects) depending on the topic and particular activity each week. Active participation in, contribution to, and completion of each of these is worth 4% of your grade.

Reflection posts (32%): After each of the eight in-class activities, you should post a short reflection on what you learned from the readings, in-class discussion, and activity to the class blog. A major tenet of most qualitative research is for the researcher to reflect on their data, analysis, and findings; this weekly assignment will help you reflect on and "think out loud" about topics as we cover them. It will also help you develop your own path through the course, as you learn about qualitative research and reflect on what you learn. This should include relating later topics to those covered earlier; qualitative research is a cyclical process that often revisits prior stages. In addition, you are strongly encouraged and recommended to read and respond to your fellow students' posts, sharing your ideas and thoughts with them. You may also post reflections on the readings outside of these weeks if you like. Each reflection post is worth 4% and is due no later than 11:59pm on the Friday following that week's class.

Project (24%): To help you gain experience in qualitative research, you will complete a small independent project during the semester. Depending on your stage in the doctoral program and your particular interests and needs, this may take many forms. I encourage you, however, to use this project to gain experience with designing qualitative research or collecting qualitative research data. Above all, you should consider and select a project that (a) contributes to both your theoretical and practical understanding and knowledge about qualitative research and methods, and (b) helps your progress through your doctoral program. You should first discuss your ideas and thinking with the instructor, then submit via e-mail a brief description of your project, due by 2pm on 1/31. A written report on your project is due via e-mail to the instructor by 2pm on 4/18. You will also give a brief presentation (about 15 minutes + 5 minutes for Q&A) in-class on 4/18.

Project updates (12%): Three times during the semester you will make a short post to the class blog updating us on the progress you have made with your project. As with the activity reflections, you are strongly encouraged and recommended to read and respond to the updates of your fellow students, sharing your ideas and thoughts with them. Each update is worth 4%; these should be posted by 11:59pm on 2/18, 3/18, and 4/8 (all Fridays).

Grading and Evaluation

In-class activities	(8 @ 4% each)	32%
Reflection posts	(8 @ 4% each)	32%
Project		24%
Project updates	(3 @ 4% each)	12%
TOTAL		100%

The following scale will be used for final grades:

93%-100%	A
90%-92%	A-
87%-89%	B+
83%-86%	B
80%-82%	B-

(Note that grades below B- are considered failing in graduate school)

Course Calendar and Readings

You can think of this seminar as consisting of four segments:

- Weeks 1-4: Overview and general issues
- Weeks 5-8: Methods of data collection
- Weeks 9-12: Methods of data analysis
- Weeks 13-15: Evaluation, ethics, and project presentations

Topics will, however, **overlap** between weeks and segments; qualitative research is a cyclical process that often revisits earlier stages, and there is particularly significant overlap between the data collection and data analysis processes. Readings, activities, and discussion will often refer and relate to previous weeks and topics. As the semester progresses you should also discover many links between earlier topics and later ones.

Many of the course readings listed below are available via the FSU Libraries, either online or physically in Goldstein, Strozier, or Dirac. Those readings that are not currently available via the FSU Libraries will be placed on reserve in Goldstein Library for your use and convenience.

Week 1 (January 10th): Course introduction and overview

Activity #1: Introducing qualitative research (reflection post due Friday 1/14)

- Fidel, R. (1993). Qualitative methods in information retrieval research. *Library and Information Science Research*, 15(3), 219-247.
- Sutton, B. (2010). Qualitative research methods in library and information science. In M. J. Bates & M. N. Maack (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences* (3rd ed., pp. 4380-4393). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Implementing the naturalistic inquiry. In *Naturalistic inquiry* (pp. 250-288). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Week 2 (January 17th): The qualitative research process

No class this week due to the holiday; we will discuss these readings next week

No post required this week

- Westbrook, L. (1997). Qualitative research. In R. R. Powell (Ed.), *Basic research methods for librarians* (3rd ed., pp. 143-163). Greenwich, CT: Ablex.
- Mason, J. (1996). Planning and designing qualitative research. In *Qualitative researching* (pp. 9-34). London, UK: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 1-44). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. **[pp. 28-36 required, rest is optional]**

Week 3 (January 24th): Epistemological and philosophical issues

Activity #2: Considering epistemologies (reflection post due Friday 1/28)

- Becker, H. S. (1996). The epistemology of qualitative research. In R. Jessor, A. Colby, & R. A. Shweder (Eds.), *Ethnography and human development: Context and meaning in social inquiry* (pp. 53-71). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Holloway, I., & Todres, L. (2003). The status of method: Flexibility, consistency and coherence. *Qualitative Research*, 3(3), 345-357. doi:10.1177/1468794103033004
- Rogers-Dillon, R. H. (2005). Hierarchical qualitative research teams: Refining the methodology. *Qualitative Research*, 5(4), 437-454. doi:10.1177/1468794105056922

Week 4 (January 31st): General data collection, coding, and analysis

Project description due via e-mail today (1/31, 2pm)

No post required this week

- Whyte, W. F. (1984). Focusing the study and analyzing the data. In *Learning from the field: A guide from experience* (pp. 225-250). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Bauer, M. W., & Aarts, B. (2000). Corpus construction: A principle for qualitative data collection. In M. W. Bauer & G. Gaskell (Eds.), *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound* (pp. 19-37). London, UK: Sage.
- Gibbs, G. R., Friese, S., & Mangabeira, W. C. (2002). The use of new technology in qualitative research. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 3(2). Retrieved from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/847>

[Order of remaining weeks is relatively flexible]

Week 5 (February 7th): Ethnography (1/2)

Activity #3: Ethnographic description (reflection post due Friday 2/11)

- Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays* (pp. 3-30). New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Clifford, J. (1988). On ethnographic authority. In *The predicament of culture: Twentieth-century ethnography, literature, and art* (pp. 21-54). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Forsythe, D. E. (2001). "It's just a matter of common sense": Ethnography as invisible work. In *Studying those who study us: An anthropologist in the world of artificial intelligence* (pp. 146-162). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Rosaldo, R. (1993). Subjectivity in social analysis. In *Culture and truth: The remaking of social analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 168-195). Boston, MA: Beacon.

Week 6 (February 14th): Ethnography (2/2): Virtual and multi-sited
Project update #1 due Friday 2/18

- Hine, C. (2000). The virtual objects of ethnography. In *Virtual ethnography* (pp. 41-66). London, UK: Sage.
- Turkle, S. (1995). TinySex and gender trouble. In *Life on the screen: Identity in the age of the Internet* (pp. 210-232). New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, 95-117.

Week 7 (February 21st): Interviews

Activity #4: Practicing interviewing techniques (reflection post due Friday 2/25)

- Kvale, S. (1996). The interview as a conversation. In *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing* (pp. 19-37). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Meho, L. I. (2006). E-mail interviewing in qualitative research: A methodological discussion. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 57(10), 1284-1295. doi:10.1002/asi.20416
- Suchman, L., & Jordan, B. (1990). Interactional troubles in face-to-face survey interviews. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 85(409), 232-241.
- Flanagan, J. C. (1954). The critical incident technique. *Psychological Bulletin*, 51(4), 327-358.

Week 8 (February 28th): Focus groups and case studies

Activity #5: Miniature case study (reflection post due Friday 3/1)

- Morgan, D. L., & Krueger, R. A. (1993). When to use focus groups and why. In D. L. Morgan (Ed.), *Successful focus groups: Advancing the state of the art* (pp. 3-19). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Albrecht, T. L., Johnson, G. M., & Walther, J. B. (1993). Understanding communication processes in focus groups. In D. L. Morgan (Ed.), *Successful focus groups: Advancing the state of the art* (pp. 51-64). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). Designing case studies. In *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed., pp. 19-56). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fidel, R. (1984). The case study method: A case study. *Library and Information Science Research*, 6(3), 273-288.

Week 9: Spring Break (*no class this week, enjoy the break!*)

Week 10 (March 14th): Ethnomethodology and hermeneutics
Project update #2 due Friday 3/18

- Garfinkel, H. (1967). What is ethnomethodology? In *Studies in ethnomethodology* (pp. 1-34). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Dourish, P., & Button, G. (1998). On "technomethodology": Foundational relationships between ethnomethodology and system design. *Human-Computer Interaction*, 13(4), 395-432. doi:10.1207/s15327051hci1304_2
- Lee, A. S. (1994). Electronic mail as a medium for rich communication: An empirical investigation using hermeneutic interpretation. *MIS Quarterly*, 18(2), 143-157.
- Chalmers, M. (2004). Hermeneutics, information and representation. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 13(3), 210-220.
- Hansson, J. (2005). Hermeneutics as a bridge between the modern and the postmodern in library and information science. *Journal of Documentation*, 61(1), 102-113. doi:10.1108/00220410510578032

Week 11 (March 21st): Grounded theory

Activity #6: Coding in grounded theory (reflection post due Friday 3/25)

- Charmaz, K. (2006). An invitation to grounded theory. In *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis* (pp. 1-12). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273-285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). Coding in grounded theory practice. In *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis* (pp. 42-71). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Week 12 (March 28th): Content analysis and discourse analysis

Activity #7: Content analysis exercise (reflection post due Friday 4/1)

- Krippendorff, K. (2004). Conceptual foundation. In *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (2nd ed., pp. 18-43). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). "Good" organizational reasons for "bad" clinic records. In *Studies in ethnomethodology* (pp. 186-207). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Budd, J. (2006). Discourse analysis and the study of communication in LIS. *Library Trends*, 55, 65-82.
- Frohmann, B. (1994). Discourse analysis as a research method in library and information science. *Library and Information Science Research*, 16, 119-138.

Week 13 (April 4th): Reliability, validity, and evaluation

Activity #8: Validity and its alternatives (reflection post due Friday 4/8)

Project update #3 also due Friday 4/8

- Gaskell, G., & Bauer, M. W. (2000). Towards public accountability: Beyond sampling, reliability, and validity. In M. W. Bauer & G. Gaskell (Eds.), *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound* (pp. 336-350). London, UK: Sage.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-607.
- Jordan, B., & Dalal, B. (2006). Persuasive encounters: Ethnography in the corporation. *Field Methods*, 18(4), 359-381. doi:10.1177/1525822X06292976
- Kvale, S. (1996). The social construction of validity. In *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing* (pp. 229-252). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Week 14 (April 11th): Ethics of qualitative research

No post required this week

- Christians, C.G. (2008). Ethics and politics in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 185-220). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Alcoff, L. M. (1995). The problem of speaking for others. In J. Roof & R. Wiegman (Eds.), *Who can speak? Authority and critical identity* (pp. 97-119). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Forsythe, D. (2001). Ethics and politics of studying up in technoscience. In D. J. Hess (Ed.), *Studying those who study us: An anthropologist in the world of artificial intelligence* (pp. 119-131). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Week 15 (April 18th): Project presentations and course wrap-up

Project due (via e-mail by 2pm)

No readings for this week; finish your project and prepare for your presentation!

Academic Honor Policy

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. As a student, you are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to your pledge to ". . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://dof.fsu.edu/honorpolicy.htm>.)

Attendance Policy

You are expected to come to class each week prepared to discuss the topic and readings for that week with the instructor and fellow students. Active participation and discussion both in and out of class is strongly encouraged; you should ask questions, analyze and critique the readings, and

as a group gain an understanding of the topic area and issues within it. Remember that we, as colleagues, are here to collectively learn and grow our understanding of qualitative research methods. Attending class; asking and answering questions in class; and thoughtfully discussing readings with your classmates in class, on the class blog, etc. will greatly help this process and your progress in both this seminar and your doctoral program.

Accommodations will be made for students who must miss class due to suffering serious illnesses or deaths in the immediate family; being called to active military duty or jury duty; religious holy days; presenting at a conference; and official University activities. You should inform the instructor why you will miss or have missed a class or assignment as soon as possible. You are encouraged to discuss any class sessions you missed with your fellow classmates. As colleagues in training I expect you to have many of the same constraints as faculty; these will be accommodated as they occur, as long as you maintain open communication!

First Day Attendance: University-wide policy requires all students to attend the first class meeting of all classes for which they are registered. The School of Library and Information Studies will drop students from a course they registered for if they do not attend the first class meeting. In order to enforce this policy, the instructor will take attendance at the first class meeting and report absences to the director of the School.

Late Assignment Policy

In general, late assignments will not earn full credit. In cases of constraints, emergencies, and crises that will result in you submitting an assignment late, you should let the instructor know as soon as possible. Such issues unfortunately occur when we least expect them; this is OK and we will deal with the repercussions of any crises on your work in this course together, making arrangements to have you make up the work that you have missed.

Americans with Disability Act

If you are a student with disabilities and need academic accommodation, you should:

- (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
- (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:
Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdr@admin.fsu.edu
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

Syllabus Change Policy

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the grading and evaluation of the course, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.